

## Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!



Page 9

**For the BEST  
& the  
BIGGEST Steak**  
*and so much more!*

[f](#) [i](#)

**Lobby Bar Menu**

**FRIDAYS**  
**2 FOR 1 Sangria**

**Lunch Special**  
**EVERYDAY 11:30AM - 5PM**

**\$28.90** +15%SC  
TAX IS INCLUDED.

**Local Deal**  
**SATURDAY**

**15%OFF** For Locals

Open daily from 11:30am - 11pm. Mondays Closed. Wilhelminastraat #80. Oranjestad, Aruba. Phone: +297 582-3677 • [www.elgaucho-aruba.com](http://www.elgaucho-aruba.com)

## Pinchos Grill & Bar


Now in its 20th plus year, owned and run by a local family.

Open 7 days a week, as of 5:00PM  
Full Service Bar  
Live Music on weekends

Reservations: (297) 583 2666 or [reservations@pinchosgrillaruba.com](mailto:reservations@pinchosgrillaruba.com)








**DON'T MISS!**  
SIGN UP FOR OUR LOYALTY CARD

New members sign up and receive **\$10**  
Existing members **PLAY 5 POINTS**  
and receive **\$10 FREE PLAY!**



J.E IRAUSQUIN BLVD 83, NOORD AT BARCELÓ ARUBA. T +297 2804000

## Trump backs new GOP plan to fund government and raise debt limit as shutdown nears

By **LISA MASCARO** and  
**KEVIN FREKING**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President-elect Donald Trump announced "success" in coming up with a new plan to fund the government and lift the debt ceiling a day before a government shutdown, urging Congress to swiftly pass it in votes as soon as Thursday evening. Trump's social media post landed as Republicans said they had narrowed in on a tentative accord after grueling closed-door talks. The new plan would keep government running for three more months, add disaster assistance for hurricane-hit states and others, and allow more borrowing through Jan. 30, 2027, Republicans said. "SUCCESS in Washington! Speaker Mike Johnson and the House have come to a very good Deal," Trump posted. Next steps were highly uncertain, and it was particularly unclear if Democrats, who votes would certainly be needed on any package in the face of hardline Republican opposition, were on board — or even brought into any negotiations. A government shutdown at risk, Johnson has been fighting to figure out how to meet Trump's sudden demands — and keep his own job — while federal offices are being told to prepare to shutter operations ahead of Friday's midnight deadline. Trump said early Thursday that Johnson will "easily remain speaker" for the next Congress if he "acts decisively and tough" in coming up with a new plan to also increase the debt limit, a stunning request just before the Christmas holidays that has put the beleaguered speaker in a bind. And if not, the president-



**Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., left, with Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., meets with reporters after presenting his final version of an interim pending bill to his caucus, at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024.**

elect warned of trouble ahead for Johnson and Republicans in Congress. "Anybody that supports a bill that doesn't take care of the Democrat quicksand known as the debt ceiling should be primaried and disposed of as quickly as possible," Trump told Fox News Digital. The tumultuous turn of events, coming just before Friday's midnight deadline to fund the government and as lawmakers were preparing to head home for the holidays, sparks a familiar reminder of what it's like in Trump-run Washington. Trump led Republicans into the longest government shutdown in history during the 2018 Christmas season, and interrupted the holidays in 2020 by tanking a bipartisan COVID-relief bill and forcing a do-over. For Johnson, who faces his own problems ahead of a Jan. 3 House vote to remain speaker, Trump's demands kept him working long into the night to broker a new

deal. Vice President-elect JD Vance joined the late-night meetings at the Capitol, bringing his young son in pajamas. Trump's allies even floated the far-fetched idea of giving billionaire Elon Musk the speaker's gavel, since the speaker is not required to be a member of the Congress. "We had a productive meeting. We're going to continue to work through the night, in the morning to get, to get an agreement," said Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., as he left the speaker's office late Wednesday. But adding an increase in the debt ceiling to what had been a bipartisan package is a show-stopper for Republicans who routinely vote against more borrowing. The current debt limit expires on Jan. 1, 2025 and threatens to bog down the start of the new administration with months of negotiations to raise it. Trump wants the problem off the table before

he joins the White House. As senior Republicans broke from a Thursday morning meeting in the House speaker's office there was no resolution yet. Rep. Tom Emmer, the third-ranking Republican in leadership, said the situation was "fluid." Federal funding is scheduled to expire at midnight Friday, a current temporary government funding bill running out as Congress was preparing a new one to keep things running for a few months. The bipartisan compromise brokered between Johnson and the Democrats, whose support will be needed in the deeply split House and Senate to ensure passage, also tacked on much-anticipated disaster aid — \$100.4 billion for states hard hit by Hurricanes Helen and Milton and other natural calamities. But the 1,500-page bill outraged conservatives for its spending and extras. Musk, in his new foray into politics,

led the charge. The wealthiest man in the world used his social media platform X to amplify the unrest, and GOP lawmakers were besieged with phone calls to their offices telling them to oppose the plan.

Trump announced his own displeasure late Wednesday, and told Johnson to start over — with the new demand on the debt limit, something that generally takes months to negotiate and that his own party generally opposes.

House Democrats emerged from a closed-door meeting Thursday angry about the collapse of bipartisan legislation, saying a deal is a deal and they were standing by the agreement they reached with Johnson and Republicans.

Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said Trump's new demands for a debt limit increase are "premature."

"This reckless Republican driven shutdown can be avoided," Jeffries said. Republicans should "simply do what is right for the American people and stick with the bipartisan agreement that they themselves negotiated." While Democrats have floated their own ideas in the past for lifting, or even doing away with the debt limit caps that have created some of the toughest debates in Congress, they appear to be in no bargaining mood to save Johnson from Trump — even before the president-elect is sworn into office.

"Here we are once again in chaos," said House Democratic Whip Katherine Clark, who detailed the harm a government shutdown would cause Americans. "And what for? Because Elon Musk, an unelected man, said, 'We're not doing this deal, and Donald Trump followed along.'" □

**Associated Press**



# Immigration drives U.S. population growth to highest rate in 23 years as residents pass 340M

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press

Immigration in 2024 drove U.S. population growth to its fastest rate in 23 years as the nation surpassed 340 million residents, the U.S. Census Bureau said Thursday.

The 1% growth rate this year was the highest it has been since 2001, and it was a marked contrast to the record low of 0.2% set in 2021 at the height of pandemic restrictions on travel to the United States, according to the annual population estimates.

Immigration this year increased by almost 2.8 million people, partly because of a new method of counting that adds people who were admitted for humanitarian reasons. Net international migration accounted for 84% of the nation's 3.3 million-person increase between 2023 and 2024.

Births outnumbered deaths in the United States by almost 519,000 between 2023 and 2024, which was an improvement over the historic low of 146,000 in 2021 but still well below the highs of previous decades.

Immigration had a meaningful impact not only nationally but also for individual states, accounting for



New United States citizens wave American flags during a naturalization ceremony during halftime at an NFL football game between the Jacksonville Jaguars and the New York Jets, Dec. 15, 2024, in Jacksonville, Fla.

all of the growth in 16 states that otherwise would have lost population from residents moving out-of-state or from deaths outpacing births, William Frey, a demographer at The Brookings Institution, said in an email. "While some of the surge may be attributed to border crossings of asylees and humanitarian migrants in an unusual year, these numbers also show how immigration can be an impor-

tant contributor to population gains in a large swath of the nation that would otherwise be experiencing slow growth or declines," Frey said. As it has been throughout the 2020s, the South was the fastest growing region in the United States in 2024, adding more new residents 1.8 million people than all the other regions combined. Texas added the most people at 562,941 new residents, fol-

lowed by Florida with an additional 467,347 new residents. The District of Columbia had the nation's fastest growth rate at 2.2%. Three states Mississippi, Vermont and West Virginia lost population this year, though by tiny amounts ranging from 127 to 516 people. In 2024, there was an easing up in the number of people moving out of coastal urban states like California and New York and into the

Sunbelt growth powerhouses like Florida and Texas compared with the peak pandemic years, Frey said. Still, the large number of people moving South this decade has caused the U.S. population center to turn sharply south after drifting southwesterly for several decades in "a demographic shock to the evolving settlement pattern of the United States," said Alex Zakrewsky, an urban planner in New Jersey who calculates the population center each year.

The group of people being included in the international migration estimates are those who enter the country through humanitarian parole, which has been granted for seven decades by Republican and Democratic presidential administrations to people unable to use standard immigration routes because of time pressure or their government's poor relations with the U.S.

The Migration Policy Institute, a Washington-based research organization, said last week that more than 5.8 million people were admitted under various humanitarian policies from 2021 to 2024. □

Associated Press

# Pentagon says it doubled the number of U.S. troops in Syria before Assad's fall

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States doubled the number of its forces in Syria to fight the Islamic State group before the overthrow of President Bashar Assad's government, the Pentagon said Thursday.

The U.S. had previously said 900 troops were in Syria, but Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary, announced that 2,000 were there and had been for a while. The Pentagon had been asked repeatedly in recent days and weeks about the U.S. presence in Syria and never disclosed the dramatic increase.

Ryder said the additional forces had been in Syria "at a minimum months it's been going on for awhile." He told reporters the increase in forces was temporary and they are there to augment the U.S. operations against the Islamic State group. He said U.S. Army conventional and special operations forces make up the bulk of the additional troops.

Rebel forces overthrew Assad two weeks ago. In the days since, Israel and Turkey have both launched military operations inside Syria's borders, including Tel Aviv's airstrikes against weapons facilities in the east that belonged to

Assad's regime and Turkey's offensive in the north-east against Kurdish forces, who have partnered with the U.S. in its fight against the Islamic State.

The U.S. also has significantly stepped up airstrikes against IS targets in Syria over concern that a power vacuum would allow the militant group to reconstitute itself. Until Thursday, the Pentagon had insisted there had been no change to the U.S. force numbers in Syria, even as questions arose as to whether the new instability there has put the U.S. mission in jeopardy. President-elect Donald Trump tried to withdraw forces from Syria during

his first term, which drove former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to resign in protest, and as he prepares to

return to the White House, Trump has said he does not support U.S. forces getting more involved in Syria. □



Pentagon press secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder speaks during a press briefing at the Pentagon Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press



# U.S. repatriates 3 Guantanamo Bay detainees, including one held 17 years without charge

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The U.S. has transferred two Malaysian detainees at the Guantanamo Bay U.S. military prison to their home country, after they pleaded guilty to charges related to deadly 2002 bombings in Bali and agreed to testify against the alleged ringleader of that and other attacks, the Pentagon said Wednesday. The transfers, and the repatriation Tuesday of a Kenyan man who'd been held at Guantanamo for 17 years without charge, come as rights groups and others push the Biden administration to end the detention of more than a dozen other men held there without charge, and amid uncertainty over the incoming Trump administration's plans for Guantanamo. Prosecutors say Mohammed Farik bin Amin and Mohammed Nazir bin Lep worked for years with Encep Nurjaman, known as Hambali, an Indonesian leader of al-Qaida affiliate Jemaah Islamiya. That includes helping Nurjaman escape capture after Oct.



In this April 17, 2019, photo, reviewed by U.S. military officials, the control tower is seen through the razor wire inside the Camp VI detention facility in Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba.

Associated Press

12, 2002 bombings that killed 202 people at two night spots in Bali, U.S. officials said. The two men entered guilty pleas to conspiracy and other charges in January. Their transfer comes after they provided testimony that prosecutors plan to use in the future against Nurja-

man, the alleged mastermind, the Pentagon said in a statement. Nurjaman is in custody in Guantanamo awaiting resumption of pre-trial hearings in January involving the Bali bombings and other attacks. The two Malaysian men's transfers leave 27 detainees

in custody at the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay. President George W. Bush set up a military tribunal and prison after the Sept. 11, 2001 al-Qaida attacks on the U.S. Bin Lep's Texas-based lawyer Brian Bouffard said it was unclear when his client might be released into the Malay-

sian community.

"I know that he will be monitored by Malaysian authorities. There's not going to be any opportunity for him to get in trouble even if he were inclined to want to get in trouble. That's not what he wants," Bouffard said.

Malaysian Home Affairs Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said in a statement the pair would undergo a comprehensive reintegration program that would include support in social services, welfare and health.

Malaysian police said in a statement the men returned to their homeland on Wednesday and would remain in custody for the duration of a rehabilitation program. Police did not say how long their incarceration would last.

Both were grateful to be back in Malaysia and committed to the rehabilitation process, police said.

Of the 202 killed in the attack, 88 were Australians. Australian survivors and victims' families were critical of the prospect of the Malaysians being freed. □

## Cuomo moves to sue a former aide who accused him of sexual harassment

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE

Associated Press

**ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)** — Former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Thursday filed a legal notice that he intends to sue a woman who accused him of sexual harassment.

The filing accuses former aide Charlotte Bennett of defaming Cuomo in a Dec. 9 statement that said the former governor sexually harassed her.

Bennett came forward in 2021 as the second woman to accuse Cuomo of sexual harassment, alleging he subjected her to invasive questions about her personal life and sexual relationships. Cuomo denies Bennett's allegations. She later sued over the alleged misconduct in separate cases in state and federal court.

Cuomo resigned in 2021 after a report from the state attorney general found he sexually harassed at least 11 women.

Earlier this month, Bennett dropped her federal lawsuit

against Cuomo before she was to be deposed. In a statement announcing the case was being dropped, a law firm representing Bennett said Cuomo "sexually harassed" her. Bennett

reposted the statement on the social platform X.

Cuomo's attorneys wrote on Thursday that the statement "was false and defamatory, and Bennett made it knowing full well that it was false and intending to cause harm to Governor Cuomo."

His lawyers added that "Cuomo fully intends to clear his name and to ensure that Bennett and her agents never again repeat the falsehood that he sexually harassed Bennet."

Cuomo is seeking compensatory and punitive damages, according to the filing.

Bennett's attorney on Thursday said a defamation case from Cuomo has no merit.

"There is a long history of using defamation lawsuits to silence and punish accus-

ers of sexual harassment. It is shameful that Mr. Cuomo has apparently now chosen to go down that path," said attorney Debra S. Katz. Bennett's lawsuit in state court is ongoing.

A separate investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice found that Cuomo subjected at least 13 state employees to a sexually hostile work environment and that his staffers retaliated against four women who raised complaints.

Cuomo, a Democrat, has denied the allegations and has dismissed the investigations as political smears. He has spent the years since his resignation working to rehabilitate his image and hint at a return to political office.

He is rumored to be considering a run for mayor of New York City. □



Former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo testifies before the House Oversight Select Subcommittee's hearing on the Coronavirus Pandemic, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Sept. 10, 2024.

Associated Press



# EU leaders insist no decisions can be taken about Ukraine without Ukraine, or behind their backs

By LORNE COOK  
Associated Press

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — European Union leaders insisted on Thursday that no decisions can be taken about the future of war-ravaged Ukraine without its consent or behind the backs of its partners in Europe, barely a month before U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

Ukraine's position is precarious more than 1,000 days into the war. Russia continues to make gains on the battlefield, pushing the front line gradually westward despite suffering heavy casualties. Ukraine's energy network is in tatters and military recruits are hard to find.

In a show of solidarity at a summit in Brussels with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, many EU leaders repeated a variation of what has become a common mantra nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine, nothing about security in Europe without Europeans.

Trump returns to the White House on Jan. 20 having promised to end the war in



European Union leaders meet for a round table meeting at an EU summit in Brussels, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024.

Ukraine quickly and talked up his relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Many Europeans are concerned that it might result in a poor deal for Ukraine.

The other big worry is that Putin will use any interregnum to rearm and cause more strife.

Rumors are swirling in Eu-

rope about possible peace talks in early 2025, and whether European peacekeepers might be needed to enforce any settlement, but the leaders are trying to keep a lid on speculation about what they are prepared to do so as not to tip their hand to Russia.

The priority now, they say, must be to strengthen

Ukraine's hand, should Zelenskyy decide it's time to negotiate.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said it's important to "ensure long-term aid to Ukraine it must be clear that we are prepared to enable support as long as it is needed." Air defense, artillery and ammunition are high on the list, he told

reporters.

Asked about Trump, Scholz said that his impression from talking to the president-elect "is that good cooperation between Europe and the U.S. is possible." He said that "the principle is always: no decisions over Ukrainians' heads, and that of course means over those of the European states."

Luxembourg Prime Minister Luc Frieden had a similar message.

"We need to stand with Ukraine, and every step ... needs to be taken with Ukraine and in the presence of the European Union.

The future of Ukraine is decided in Europe and not elsewhere," he said.

Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof underlined that only Ukraine can determine the conditions for talks, "and it is not for us to talk about that. At the moment, Ukraine has not yet indicated that they are prepared to do so."

Zelenskyy said Kyiv needs the EU and U.S. to stay united next year, saying that "only together the United States and Europe can stop Putin and save Ukraine. □

Associated Press

# Canada's Trudeau to shuffle his Cabinet Friday amid resignation calls and rising discontent

By ROB GILLIES  
Associated Press

**TORONTO (AP)** — Embattled Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will shuffle his Cabinet Friday, a senior official familiar with the matter said Thursday.

The official confirmed the shuffle and spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

Trudeau is facing rising discontent over his leadership, and the abrupt departure of his finance minister on Monday could be something he can't recover from.

A rising number of Liberal lawmakers are calling on Trudeau to resign but new Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc said Thursday Trudeau has "full support of his Cabinet."

LeBlanc said he respects the views of Liberal Members of Parliament who want Trudeau to resign.

"That's a view they are expressing. The prime minister listened carefully when that view was expressed to him," LeBlanc said.

"He listened, in some cases responded to specific things that were raised, and he said he would reflect carefully."

LeBlanc said the government will remain focused on work and addressing the threat by President-elect Donald Trump to impose a 25% tariff on all Canadian products when he is inaugurated next month. Trudeau has led the country for nearly a decade, but has become widely unpopular in recent years over a wide range of issues, including the high cost of living and rising inflation.

There is no mechanism for Trudeau's party to force him out in the short-term. He could resign, or his Liberal party could be forced from power by a "no confidence" vote in Parliament that would trigger an election that would very likely favor the opposing Conservative Party.

As rising numbers of Liberal lawmakers called Tuesday for Trudeau to resign, the country's minister of natural resources, Jonathan Wilkinson, said "we all need to give him a little time to reflect." □



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is pictured through glass as he speaks with members of his caucus in Ottawa, Ontario, Dec. 16, 2024.

Associated Press



# Number of dead and missing still unclear as first aid arrives in quake-hit Pacific nation of Vanuatu

By **CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY**

**Associated Press**

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)** — Amid the havoc wrought by a violent earthquake two days earlier, Ivan Oswald and his staff prepared for lunchtime service Thursday at Nambawan Cafe, on an idyllic stretch of Vanuatu's waterfront.

The menu for the usual lunchtime rush was replaced with defrosted sausages for emergency workers sifting through rubble in search of those trapped alive or killed in flattened buildings when the massive, 7.3 jolt hit Port Vila, Vanuatu's capital 48 hours earlier. Search crews were joined Thursday by specialists arriving in waves from Australia, New Zealand and France.

Earthquakes are normal for the South Pacific nation made up of 80 islands and home to 330,000 people, but Tuesday's terrifying shake was like nothing residents had felt before. Centered 30 kilometers (19 miles) offshore, at a depth of 57 kilometers (35 miles), the quake was followed by hundreds of rattling aftershocks. Death toll remains uncertain. The death toll was still unclear and official information remained scarce. The government initially confirmed 14 deaths. Early on Friday, it said 10 had



**A member of Australia's Federal Police stands by a collapsed building in Port Vila, Vanuatu, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024, following a magnitude 7.3 earthquake that struck off the coast of Vanuatu in the South Pacific Ocean, Tuesday, Dec. 17.**

the quake was followed by hundreds of rattling aftershocks. Death toll remains uncertain.

The death toll was still unclear and official information remained scarce. The government initially confirmed 14 deaths. Early on Friday, it said 10 had

been verified by the hospital but officials expected the number would rise. More than 200 injured people were treated, officials said, but that figure has not been updated since around early Wednesday. Nearly 1,000 people have been displaced, the United Nations Office for the Co-

ordination of Humanitarian Affairs said, with that number too likely to grow. On Thursday, telecommunications -- though piecemeal and patchy -- were more widely restored after a near total blackout following the quake. It offered residents of Vanuatu answers about the scale

of the damage and about how many people were missing. As word got around that Nambawan had power and an independent internet source, rescuers, tourists and locals visited to charge devices and attempt to locate their relatives. "We've had a few tears," said Oswald, the cafe's owner. "I can't help with the rescue, but I can help with this."

Damage concentrated in the capital. The extent of the damage became clearer on Thursday. The worst-hit area was Port Vila's downtown, busy with lunchtime shoppers on Tuesday. Some outlying islands and villages near the quake's epicenter have experienced landslides. Infrastructure damage was extensive, including to hospitals, roads, buildings, two major water reservoirs and gas pipes. Response efforts were hampered by access problems. A massive landslide has blocked the sea port, limiting the transport of essential supplies and personnel, the UN humanitarian agency said. □

Damage concentrated in the capital. The extent of the damage became clearer on Thursday. The worst-hit area was Port Vila's downtown, busy with lunchtime shoppers on Tuesday. Some outlying islands and villages near the quake's epicenter have experienced landslides. Infrastructure damage was extensive, including to hospitals, roads, buildings, two major water reservoirs and gas pipes. Response efforts were hampered by access problems. A massive landslide has blocked the sea port, limiting the transport of essential supplies and personnel, the UN humanitarian agency said. □

Infrastructure damage was extensive, including to hospitals, roads, buildings, two major water reservoirs and gas pipes. Response efforts were hampered by access problems. A massive landslide has blocked the sea port, limiting the transport of essential supplies and personnel, the UN humanitarian agency said. □

Infrastructure damage was extensive, including to hospitals, roads, buildings, two major water reservoirs and gas pipes. Response efforts were hampered by access problems. A massive landslide has blocked the sea port, limiting the transport of essential supplies and personnel, the UN humanitarian agency said. □

Infrastructure damage was extensive, including to hospitals, roads, buildings, two major water reservoirs and gas pipes. Response efforts were hampered by access problems. A massive landslide has blocked the sea port, limiting the transport of essential supplies and personnel, the UN humanitarian agency said. □

Infrastructure damage was extensive, including to hospitals, roads, buildings, two major water reservoirs and gas pipes. Response efforts were hampered by access problems. A massive landslide has blocked the sea port, limiting the transport of essential supplies and personnel, the UN humanitarian agency said. □

# Bosnia's capital Sarajevo chokes on toxic air as a thick blanket of winter fog rolls over the city

**SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP)** — Flights were grounded and people were told to stay indoors as a thick blanket of smog Thursday engulfed Bosnia's capital of Sarajevo as residents tried to cope with toxic air.

The Swiss air quality technology company IQAir, which assesses air quality in real time, put Sarajevo's air quality index, or AQI, at a "very unhealthy" 225, ranking the city as the third most-polluted in the world. "This is horrible, we are choking, particularly people with heart conditions," said pensioner Hajra Subasic. "I can barely breathe, you see how hard it is for me to speak."

Sarajevo and other major cities in the Balkans are traditionally very polluted during winter months as countries there rely on coal and wood for heating. Experts have warned of effects on people's health because

bad air is linked to various diseases and premature deaths. Nestled in a valley surrounded by mountains, Sarajevo is particularly prone to air pollution. Bad

urban planning and proliferation of tall buildings have made the problem worse in recent years. "Nobody is doing anything," fumed Subasic. "I can't believe this is happening in Bosnia's capital and they (authorities) can't fix it."

Balkan states generally have poor record in environment protection despite promises to improve the situation as they seek to move closer to European Union membership. Balkan rivers are often clogged with garbage and recycling is almost non-existent. The air in neighboring Serbia's capital Belgrade also was deemed "unhealthy" on Thursday with the air quality index put at 170. In Sarajevo, planes were

grounded during the morning hours because of the fog and drivers were warned to take additional care because of low visibility. Many people could be seen wearing face masks for at least some protection.

A Sarajevo resident, who gave only her first name as Nada, said she tries to evade pollution by going to the mountains around the city where the air is clean and from where Sarajevo can be seen covered in a cloud of fog below.

"I accumulate some strength there but I have no idea how long it will last," she said. "It's even worse in our flats because of the heating and dry air and because we can't open our windows." □

A Sarajevo resident, who gave only her first name as Nada, said she tries to evade pollution by going to the mountains around the city where the air is clean and from where Sarajevo can be seen covered in a cloud of fog below.

"I accumulate some strength there but I have no idea how long it will last," she said. "It's even worse in our flats because of the heating and dry air and because we can't open our windows." □

"I accumulate some strength there but I have no idea how long it will last," she said. "It's even worse in our flats because of the heating and dry air and because we can't open our windows." □



**Avaz Twist Tower building, 172 meters high, peaks through a dense layer of fog and smog in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024**

**Associated Press**





## Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names



Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history be-

hind it that gives it life and meaning.

### Anabui/Tierra Del Sol

This neighborhood can be seen on Van Raders map and Werbata as Anna Boei. Anna Boei is a name of which there isn't much information about its origin.

The best historians were able to deduce is that this name came to be because of a miscommunication between Van Spengler and the natives who were

living on the island. In the Arawak/Taino language one can find the word Anaiboa, which consists of Ana meaning flower or the best and Iboa; the juice of a cassava, which together would mean "the best juice of a cassava".

If one assumes that the actual word heard was Ana-boio instead, consisting of Ana meaning the best and Boio (bohio); house, the iteration of Anabui would mean "the best house." This is the origin that has been more or less speculated and assumed for the word Anabui and it's meaning.

During the second world war and later, this area was used as a terrain for training of shooting by militia and latero n Korps Mariniers (the marines of Aruba). By the end of the previous century a large part of Anabui was developed to have luxurious villas and a golf course, which lead to it getting the

name Tierra Del Sol, Spanish for Land of the Sun. The name is not an official name, but the name of the development project that took place. It is hoped that the original and 'old' name of Anabui is never lost and now it will be remembered by both locals and tourists.

### Angochi

This name can be seen on the Werbata map with little and cursive letters. It is the unofficial name for the area given by a tenant to the land that was rented to him.

The biggest probability that

historians believe is that it comes from native descent, during the time in the 19th century where Mestizos still lived on Aruba. The name can't really be explain and according to books on its history seems to be more of a sign of corruption.

However, it seems to come from combining A(n), which is a generalizing prefix and Goeiza, which means 'the spirit of a living man'. Angochi remains more of a guess. □

**This neighborhood's abbreviation is; An.**



**(Oranjestad)--If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the pre-historic caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.**

### Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "Colored Hill". Sero Colorado has deep historical ties with the once-thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact,

## Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

### Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the Arikok National Park. Recognizable sites within this area includes the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight deviations from what actually happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this

remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

### San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though

one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as "Shon" by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas.

**Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog.**



# LIV Casino at Barceló Aruba Introduces Exciting New Baccarat Electronic Table Games!



Oranjestad, Aruba – LIV Casino at Barceló Aruba is excited to announce the launch of our brand-new Baccarat electronic table games! This exciting addition brings a modern twist to the classic game, offering a unique and engaging experience for all players.

We warmly invite the local Asian community and all gaming enthusiasts to come and try out these state-of-the-art Baccarat tables. Whether you're an experienced player or new to the game, our Baccarat electronic tables promise endless excitement and the chance to win big!

Join us at LIV Casino and be among the first to experience this innovative way to play Baccarat in Aruba.

For more information, visit us at LIV Casino, Barceló Aruba. [□](#)



## START YOUR DAY IN PARADISE

# laguna

OPEN DAILY  
7 – 11 AM

For reservations +297-526-6680

Extensive Buffet  
Air-Conditioned Dining  
Your Favorite Breakfast Classics  
Wake-Up Cocktails  
Outdoor Terrace Dining  
A La Carte Breakfast Specialties

**Hilton**  
ARUBA CARIBBEAN  
RESORT & CASINO

## Aruba to me

**ORANJESTAD** — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. [□](#)





**Celebrating Forty Years - 1,600,000 Point Giveaway Every Friday, Saturday & Sunday**

**50/30**  
*Friday!*

We're giving away  
**\$50 Free Slot Play**  
to lucky slot and table  
game players **every**  
**30 minutes** from  
7pm to Midnight!

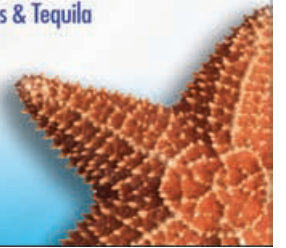
### THE SHOPS AT ALHAMBRA CASINO

Auntie Anne's Pretzels | Aruba Aloe | Baskin-Robbins | M8 Botique  
Juan Valdez Café | Hungry Piranha - Pizza, Wings & More  
The Brownstone Ribs and Seafood | Moments & Memories Jewelry  
Fusion - Piano & Wine Bar | Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Treasure Cove  
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard | The Market  
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts  
Coming Soon: El Patio Tacos & Tequila

**Alhambra**  
CASINO AND SHOPS

Open daily 10am to 3am | J.E. Irausquin Blvd #47 | 588.9000 | [casinoalhambra.com](http://casinoalhambra.com)

Play Responsibly. Visit [www.gamblersanonymous.org](http://www.gamblersanonymous.org) if you or someone you know has a gambling problem.



## Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitor at the Mill Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honoree was respectively honored with a certificate for his years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

### The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

### The honoree was:

Goodwill Ambassadors  
Mr. Pawel Bankowski from Bakersfield, California, United States.



Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Mill Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honoree, presented him with gifts, and thanked him for choosing Aruba as his favorite vacation destination, as his home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's sunny, warm weather year round
- Aruba's white sand beaches
- Aruba's friendly and safe local culture
- Aruba's spectacular geological formations, like caves, rock formations, hills and natural pool
- Diverse water sport activities in clear waters

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for his continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

## Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!

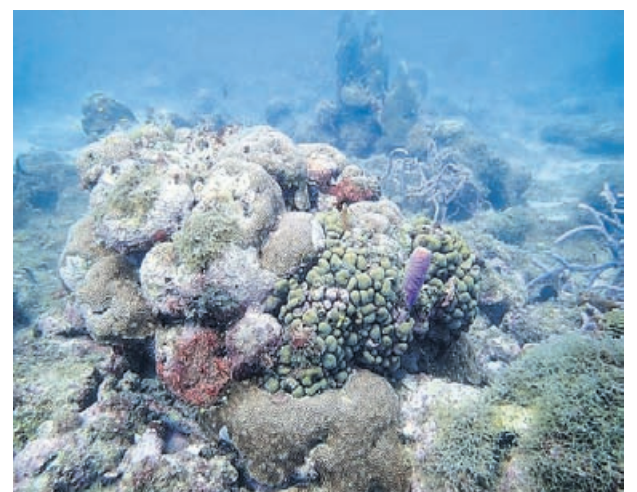
(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized

coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times in the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.



This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserving our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! □







All Fully Furnished w/Kitchen, Airco, Cable Tv, FREE WIFI (in and outside rooms).  
Swimming Pool, Gym, Library, Laundry Room & BBQ Sets.  
Less than 1 mile from Eagle Beach & 2 Large Supermarkets.

**FEEL FREE TO CONTACT OR VISIT US.**

Mon-Fri: 8am - 7pm. Sat & Sun: 9am - 5pm. Worldwide calls: (297)-582-0697

**+1 866 470 1411**

Schotlandstraat 70, Oranjestad, Aruba

Email: info@arubaqualityapartments.com | Whatsapp: (297) 593 9647

Website: www.arubaqualityapartments.com

## Keeping up with the conniving spider... Nanzi fools Cha Tiger

**Many years ago, Cha\* Tiger did not live in the mondi\*, but among civil society. Back then, he was feared by everyone. When he walked past in a halfway, everyone around would make room immediately, that's how ferocious he was.**

One night a group of friends was hanging out and they were talking about Cha Tiger. "You know, that tiger sure is incredibly strong and I don't trust him one bit. He probably eats a lot too. Oh, I'm so scared of him!" one person said.

"Oh, don't be stupid! What can Cha Tiger do? He's all bark and no bite, that's it. I certainly am not afraid of him. I bet you guys that I could even sit on his back like I would any donkey." It was Nanzi who said this. The people around him laughed at his remarks, thinking how silly it was for him to say such things.

"You, Nanzi? You are such a liar! He'll stomp you into next Tuesday, stop saying such nonsense."

"I'm not lying!" Nanzi defended himself. "He'll take me all the way to Shon Arei\*."

The next morning, Shon Arei already knew of what Nanzi had been saying about Cha Tiger. He was really curious to see if Nanzi was brave enough to put his money where his mouth is. Cha Tiger walked past.

"Hey, Cha Tiger!" someone called to him. He growled at the person. "Hey, Cha Tiger! Listen!"

"Nanzi made fun of you, said he wasn't afraid of you at all! Said he could sit on your back and that you weren't as strong as we think you are."

Cha Tiger stopped dead in

his tracks, furious. "Well, I'll set him straight!" Cha Tiger ran toward Nanzi's house, prepared to teach Nanzi a painful lesson. The entire way there he was growling and yelling, making everyone around aware what was going to happen. They all ran inside and peaked through the blinds to see the fight that was going to unfold.

Nanzi also heard Cha Tiger's screams, slowly getting closer and closer. He was terrified. His face turned pale, and his teeth started chattering like someone with a high fever. Sweat was dripping down his forehead.

When Cha Tiger arrived at Nanzi's place, he stormed in and saw Nanzi's frail body lying face down in the corner.

"Hey, how are you, Cha Tiger?" Nanzi asked, his voice trembling. "I Heard you were making fun of me in front of your little friends, so I came to hear from your own mouth what you have to say to me," Cha Tiger retorted, still fuming.

"Me? Talk bad about you?" Nanzi chuckled nervously. "People are such liars, I swear. Can't you see how sick I am here?" Nanzi took a pause, like someone who couldn't breathe properly.

In his case of course, it was probably from extreme fear. "Shi Maria\* wanted to take me to Shon Arei, where someone can heal me from my illness." Still wrapped up in his act, Nanzi turned back face down. "Me, a father of nine little children..."

Cha Tiger was shocked. Nanzi looked absolutely terrible, God knows he was dying.

"Cha Tiger, you're strong. Could you put me on your back and take me to Shon Arei, I can barely walk," Nanzi pleaded. Cha Tiger took pity on the spider and agreed to do this favor. Nanzi climbed

on the tiger's back, letting his body fall down and grabbing on to Cha Tiger's neck. "Would you mind putting a rope in your mouth so I can hold on? That way I can sit up straight," Nanzi asked. Cha Tiger growled in reluctance but said OK. And so they made their way to Shon Arei.

Once they started traveling through the mondi, Nanzi turned to Cha Tiger and said: "These mosquitos are so annoying! Cha Tiger, do you mind if I cut a piece of branch so I can keep these mosquitos away?" Cha Tiger let him take his branch.

Eventually they made it out the mondi to where everyone else was. Nanzi immediately perked up and whacked Cha Tiger with his branch, making the tiger jump. He ran all the way to Shon Arei's castle. Exhausted, he plumped down in front of His Majesty.

"See, Shon Arei? Cha Tiger ain't nothing but a big donkey!" Nanzi said proudly. Everyone around cheered: "Hurray, Nanzi!" Poor Cha Tiger was so embarrassed that he was fooled by the conniving spider, and so he ran into the mondi to hide. To this day, it's said that the tiger still hides away in the mondi.

Cha: Nickname placed in front of someone's name and can mean anything, like friend. However, it often has negative connotations first. Mondí: dry wooded areas found on the ABC islands.

Shon Arei: The King  
Shi Maria: Nanzi's wife.  
Story and pictures are from "Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)" by Nilda Pinto.





# Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost: Aruban fruits and vegetables

**Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mangoes hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.**

## Mispel

This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

## Kenepa



Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

## Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of

fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

## Shimarucu



Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

## Tamarind



A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system. Start the day with a 'batida' (smoothie) enriched with a local veggie touch or select your restaurant that offers local vegetable dishes to get the real pure taste of it.

## Comcomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Comcomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

## Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

## Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

## Pampuna



In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruban restaurants is Sopa Di Pampuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □



**CROSSWORD**

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Denali setting  
7 "Like that'll happen!"  
11 Soup veggie  
12 Edit menu choice  
13 Fries source  
14 Sub-standard  
15 Play-ground sight  
17 School member  
20 Himalayan land  
23 — Arbor  
24 Totally trusted  
26 First número  
27 Road sealer  
28 Cut off  
29 The Empire State  
31 John, to Ringo  
32 Shady spot  
33 Sets the price at  
34 Lets in  
37 Car bar  
39 Philippine peninsula  
43 Work the land  
44 Winter dripper  
45 Fall short of

- 46 Put into piles

**DOWN**

- 1 Swiss peak  
2 Summer sign  
3 Small worker  
4 Secret supply  
5 Tailed flier  
6 Soothing plant  
7 Nanny's kin  
8 European flowers  
9 Altar words  
10 Gift tag word  
16 Long-legged bird

- 17 Animal life  
18 Central about  
19 Projectiles in a winter battle  
21 Down-loadable read  
22 Printing goofs  
24 Squall  
25 Simple card game  
30 Mountain calls  
33 Moving  
35 Long-plumed bird  
36 Meal in a shell  
37 Cash dispenser  
38 Clock numeral  
40 Play part  
41 Pub order  
42 Homer's neighbor

M	E	D	I	A		L	E	A	R	N
E	X	A	L	T		I	G	L	O	O
S	P	I	L	L	I	N	G	O	U	T
S	O	S		A	R	T		E	T	E
			A	S	K	E	W			
A	D	U	L	T		L	A	Z	E	S
W	I	S	E			S	O	R	T	
E	X	E	R	T		S	T	O	R	Y
			T	R	A	C	E			
S	O	W		O	L	E		C	H	I
C	H	I	L	L	I	N	G	O	U	T
A	N	G	E	L		T	I	L	L	S
N	O	S	E	S		S	N	A	K	Y

1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11							12			
13							14			
			15			16				
17	18	19				20			21	22
23				24	25					
26				27				28		
29			30					31		
32							33			
		34			35	36				
37	38				39			40	41	42
43					44					
45					46					

A X Y D L B A A X R  
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-20

**CRYPTOQUOTE**

C L H X P B Q V M C    Q G M    W G M J J S

W Q J J M G L C    M J N D M F    R L

X Q J M G ' C    F G M Q K C .    —    Q L J D H L S

J .    D R L N V C

Cryptoquote: BLESSED IS THE SEASON WHICH ENGAGES THE WHOLE WORLD IN A CONSPIRACY OF LOVE. — HAMILTON WRIGHT MARIE

**Cruise ship Schedule: December 16 - 22 2024**

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	16	ENCHANTED PRINCESS	08.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	17	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN VIVA	13.00	21.00	I	1
WED	18	NORWEGIAN JEWEL	14.30	21.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
FRI	20	CARNIVAL MIRACLE	09.00	22.00	C	1
SAT	21	STAR CLIPPER	09.00	18.00	I	1
		EXPLORER OF THE SEAS	16.30	****	C	1
		STAR PRIDE	06.00	18.00	B	1
SUN	22	EXPLORER OF THE SEAS - dept.	****	18.00	C	-
		FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E	-

**Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba**

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

**Electrical power**



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply

**Drinking water**



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

**Supermarket hours**



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

**Safety**



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

**Honey Dolls**  
MESSAGE AND ESCORT SERVICE

**Beautiful Latin Girls**  
Pick-up & Delivery

Serving Men - Couple - Women - All Genders

+297 565-9535

WWW.PLEASUREINARUBA.COM

24/7



## FDA updates the definition of 'healthy' foods



Canadian certified organic farm-raised King Salmon filets are placed on a tray in a store in Fairfax, Va., April 10, 2015.

Associated Press

**By JONEL ALECCIA**  
**AP Health Writer**

Packaged foods in the U.S. will have to follow new rules in order to call themselves "healthy," according to changes finalized Thursday by the Food and Drug Administration. It's an update of the agency's definition originally devised 30 years ago. The move is aimed at helping Americans navigate food labels at the grocery store and make choices that are aligned with federal dietary guidelines in hopes of reducing rates of diet-related chronic disease, the FDA said.

Under the rule, products that claim to be "healthy" must contain a certain amount of food from one or more food groups such as fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy and protein. And for the first time, the rule sets certain limits for added sugars. Foods must also limit sodium and saturated fat at levels that depend on the type of product, the FDA said.

The change banishes foods such as sugary cereals, highly sweetened yogurts, white bread and some granola bars from bearing a "healthy" label, while allowing foods such as avocados, olive oil, salmon, eggs and some trail mix to use it. Even water can now be labeled as healthy, the agency said.

"It's critical for the future of the country that food be a vehicle for wellness," FDA Commissioner Robert Califf said in a statement. "Improving access to nutrition information is an important public health effort the FDA can undertake to help people build healthy eating patterns." The new rule will take effect within two months and food manufacturers will have until February 2028 to comply. A label that designates certain foods as healthy is still being developed, FDA officials said. Under the previous rule, about 15% of products were eligible for the healthy designation, but

only 5% made the claim. First proposed in 2022, the change is a much-needed update to "horribly outdated" guidance, said Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, director of the Food is Medicine Institute at Tufts University. "Big picture, this is a huge improvement from a 30-year-old outdated definition based on 40-year-old science," he said. The new rule acknowledges that dietary and nutrition knowledge has progressed over three decades and that the previous definition didn't jibe with dietary guidelines that are the cornerstone of federal programs and policies. Consumer Brands Associa-

tion, a food industry trade group, said that the new rule "stands to exclude some packaged foods, despite countless years of industry innovation to provide healthier options." Sarah Gallo, an official for the group, said it is concerned the new rule "is not based on clear and unambiguous scientific evidence" and doesn't fully consider the full potential economic impact on consumers.

The updated criteria are based on data that could improve public health, including diet-related chronic ailments such as heart disease and diabetes, the FDA said.

More than three-quarters of Americans have diets low in vegetables, fruit and dairy, according to the FDA. Nearly 80% exceed limits on saturated fat, more than 60% exceed limits on added sugars and about 90% exceed limits on sodium that can reduce chronic disease. □



### HEALTH

#### DOCTOR ON DUTY

##### Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm  
Tel. 527 4000

##### San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours  
Tel. 524 8833

#### PHARMACY ON DUTY

##### Oranjestad:

Dakota: Tel. 588 7364

San Nicolas:

San Nicolas: Tel. 584 5712

#### OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850

Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

+297 588 0539

#### EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

#### TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

#### TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

#### AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank	Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional	Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes	Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention	Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club	Tel. 525 2672

#### General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118

Like us on  
**Facebook**



ARUBA TODAY NEWS



#### Editor

Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.  
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668  
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.  
Acc. #23951903  
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

#### Editors

Pilar Flores  
Richard Brooks  
Angenette Figuero

#### Sales

Mark Gomes  
Sulaika Croes

#### Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

#### Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

#### Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22  
T: 582-7800

E: news@arubatoday.com

W: www.arubatoday.com

@arubatoday



# The best Christmas movies for every mood

By **LINDSEY BAHR** and **JAKE COYLE**

**AP Film Writers**

'Tis the season for spirited and winless debates about what the best Christmas movie is. No one needs us to remind you about the obvious holiday movies playing on repeat on cable, whether it's "It's a Wonderful Life", "Home Alone" or "Love, Actually," or even those holiday adjacent classics like "Eyes Wide Shut" and "The Godfather." But perhaps you are looking to go beyond the obvious this year (sorry, "Christmas Story," "White Christmas" etc, etc).

Associated Press Film Writers Jake Coyle and Lindsey Bahr have you covered with the best Christmas films for every mood.

**A movie that feels like a Christmas movie but isn't, really**

**"Grand Budapest Hotel":** Truthfully, there's nothing outside of a little snow to make Wes Anderson's 2014 delight a Christmas movie. But I don't think there's another movie that better resembles the experience of opening a present than "Grand Budapest Hotel." Unwrap Anderson's intricate designs and the movie's Russian doll-like narratives, and smile. (Available for digital rental) Coyle

**Best movie for feeling fancy "Metropolitan" (1990):** Who among us hasn't dreamt of doing debutante season in New York? Maybe don't answer that, but Whit Stillman's "Metropolitan," about a few privileged youths on the Upper East Side, is the ideal film to turn on when you're craving something that feels like an elegant evening on the town but doesn't require breaking out the white tie and ball gowns. (Streaming on Criterion, MAX, Hulu and Prime Video) Bahr

**Best performance next to felt**

**"A Muppets Christmas Carol" (1992):** It's one thing to do Dickens with, you know, other humans. But Michael Caine gives an

Oscar-worthy performance as Ebenezer Scrooge while sharing the screen with the likes of Beaker and Dr. Bunsen Honeydew. To be fair, though, Gonzo the Great and Rizzo the Rat are also really good in this. (Streaming on Disney+) Coyle

**Best Christmas cry**

**"The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (1964):** Jacques Demy's technicolor musical isn't exclusively set at Christmas, but its final tearjerker scene at that snowy gas station is enough for me. The whole candy-colored experience, from Catherine Deneuve's whimsical bows to Michel Legrand's sweeping, melancholy score just feels right around the holidays. (Streaming on The Criterion Channel) Bahr

**The best L.A. Christmas movie**

**"Kiss Kiss Bang Bang":** Yuletide traditions don't normally include a motormouth Robert Downey Jr., but Shane Black's 2005 neo-noir black comedy is worth revisiting perennially whether or not it technically qualifies as a Christmas movie. In "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang," about a thief-turned-actor in Los Angeles, Christmas is more of a decorative ornament set ironically against all the deliciously unwholesome seediness. (Available for digital rental) Coyle

**Best house swapping fantasy**

**"The Holiday" (2006):** Ok, so the cozy English cottage isn't real, but what is? The premise? The romances? Cameron Diaz's sprint through snowy fields and country roads in stilettos? Mr. Napkin Head? (Actually, maybe Mr. Napkin Head).

The thing is it doesn't really matter, does it? Nancy Meyers' romantic fantasy is never trying to be anything other than a delightful movie, a little too earnest, a little too glossy and an unabashed ode to the classic movies Meyers loves right down to Eli Wallach teaching a new generation about the "meet cute." (Streaming on Hulu and



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Kate Winslet, left, and Jack Black in a scene from "The Holiday."

Associated Press

Prime Video) Bahr

**A great Christmas thriller not named "Die Hard"**

**"Three Days of the Condor":** I'll take any excuse to rewatch Sydney Pollack's 1975 spy thriller with Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway. But, like in "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang," the Christmas backdrop isn't accidental. If the holidays are the ultimate time of togetherness, "Three Days of the Condor" questions what that means in a post-Watergate world. (Streaming on Paramount+) Coyle

**Best recent kids Christmas movie**

**"Klaus":** There's such a steady stream of mediocre or worse holiday movies that it can be easy to miss when a gem arrives. Sergio Pablos' 2019 animated Netflix film was basically an origin story for Santa Claus by way of a desperate postman stationed in a remote northern village. Further proof, along with "Miracle on 34th Street," that the best Christmas movies hinge on the postal service. (Streaming on Netflix) Coyle

**For the under-five set**

**"Shaun the Sheep: The Flight Before Christmas" (2021):** Clocking in at only 30 minutes, this is the perfect film for the littlest ones in the house. It's sweet, funny and adventurous and not even a little bit scary (unless you fear flying sleighs and botched recipes). (Stream-

ing on Netflix) Bahr

**Best general holiday-period movie**

**"Nobody's Fool":** Robert Benton's 1994 Richard Russo adaptation, with Paul Newman, spans Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve. And while that covers Christmas, the richness of "Nobody's Fool" exceeds its vaguely holiday setting. It's a movie more about daily smalltown struggles and long-term regrets, yet its warmth could match that any of any more traditional Christmas movie, and then some. That's much owed to Newman, but there are countless great performances here, including Jessica Tandy (in her final film), a never better Bruce Willis and a young Phillip Seymour Hoffman as a sniveling police officer. It makes me happy just thinking about it. (Streaming on Kanopy, available for digital rental) Coyle

**For midcentury style and heartbreak**

**"Carol" (2015):** Even if Rooney Mara didn't catch Cate Blanchett's eye while wearing a Santa hat behind the counter of a Manhattan department store, Todd Haynes' "Carol" would still be one of the loveliest, most achingly tender Christmas movies around. Romance, heartbreak, plaids and martinis, "Carol" is truly flung out of space. (Streaming on Netflix, Paramount+ and MUBI)

Bahr

**The ultimate TCM Christmas movie**

**"Christmas in Connecticut" (1945):** You don't have to watch it on TCM but it's certainly a fitting place to catch this 1945 screwball classic, with Barbara Stanwyck. She plays a popular homemaking column writer whose false persona as a family woman with a Connecticut farm is challenged when her boss (Sydney Greenstreet) comes for Christmas dinner. As a rule, it's good to watch everything with Greenstreet. But the central conceit of "Christmas in Connecticut" that the perfect Christmas is a lie, and isn't that fun has proved remarkably durable. (Streaming on WatchTCM) Coyle

**For 19th century New England vibes**

**"Little Women" (1994 and 2019):** Gillian Armstrong's "Little Women" just feels like Christmas. Maybe part of that is because it came out around the holidays 30 years ago or that its DVD cover leans into it. But then you remember Beth's piano, the girls stomping through the snow with their Christmas feast, the caroling, the return of their father, the fireplaces and nightcaps and it makes sense. Those wanting all of this with a side of dancing Chalamet, Greta Gerwig's version is there for the taking too. □



# Cody Bellinger experienced World Series title with dad Clay at old Yankee Stadium

By **RONALD BLUM**

**AP Baseball Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Cody Bellinger experienced a World Series title at old Yankee Stadium.

That's when his dad Clay was part of the 1999 and 2000 champions.

"I have small memories of like the playroom, the kids' playroom that I would go to during the games," Cody said Thursday, two days after New York acquired him from the Chicago Cubs. "My mom did a great job with the camcorder and so we would watch replays of it growing up and then it kind of helps me remember what we were doing out there when I was 5 or 6."

He also has memories of his dad in the minors.

"I was the bat boy," Cody said. "That was always really, really cool for me to be able to run out on the field and pick up the players' bats and shag their batting practice," Bellinger figures to play outfield or first base with the Yankees, who are retooling after the loss to Juan Soto to the Mets. Left-hander Max Fried was added to the starting rotation and closer Devin Williams to the bullpen.



**National League Rookie of the Year Cody Bellinger, left, of the Los Angeles Dodgers, receives his award from his father Clay Bellinger during the New York Chapter of the Baseball Writers' Association of America annual dinner in New York, Sunday, Jan. 28, 2018.**

Clay Bellinger was an outfielder and infielder for the Yankees from 1999 to 2001, then finished his big league career with the Anaheim Angels in 2002. In Game 2 of the 2000 World Series, he caught Todd Zeile's drive off Mariano Rivera at the top of the left-field wall.

"It is truly wild. When I got the news, I called him and he was

very excited," Cody said of his dad. "He plays it all cool. But I know deep down he's really excited."

Cody won the 2019 NL MVP award with the Los Angeles Dodgers after hitting .305 with 47 homers, 115 RBIs and a 1.035 OPS.

He followed with three straight subpar seasons, missing time in 2021 because of calf, ham-

string and rib injuries. He was cut after the 2022 season and signed a \$17.5 million, one-year deal with the Cubs. Bellinger hit a career-high .307 with 29 homers and 97 RBIs, became a free agent again and in late February signed an \$80 million, three-year contract with the Cubs that allowed him to opt out after 2024 and 25.

**Associated Press**

He hit .266 with 18 homers and 78 RBIs in 130 games this year, missing time because of a broken right rib. The Cubs traded the 29-year-old with \$52.5 million remaining on the contract and agreed to pay the Yankees \$5 million.

If the Yankees acquire a first baseman, they could align Bellinger in center with Aaron Judge in right and Jason Domínguez in left or put Domínguez in center and Bellinger in left.

Bellinger learned how to stay sharp at multiple positions from former Dodgers teammate Kiké Hernández and told manager Aaron Boone he's flexible.

"I told him that wherever y'all need me to play, I'll play, whether it's left, center. If Judge gets a DH day, I'll play right, or if you need me at first base, I'll play first," he said. "I enjoy doing that stuff. I think that it helps the teams that I'm on win."

A left-handed hitter, Bellinger could benefit from Yankee Stadium's short porch. New York has 87 games with those dimensions because the Tampa Bay Rays will be playing home games at Steinbrenner Field, the Yankees' spring training site. □

# Sammy Sosa appears to acknowledge PED use, apologizes; Cubs welcome him back into fold

By **ANDREW SELIGMAN**

**AP Sports Writer**

**CHICAGO (AP)** — Sammy Sosa appeared to acknowledge using performance enhancing drugs during a career in which he hit more than 600 home runs, and the Chicago Cubs said they were ready to welcome back their former star.

In a statement released Thursday through Aurora Global Consulting, Sosa said he is sorry for mistakes. "There were times I did whatever I could to recover from injuries in an effort to keep my strength up to perform over 162 games," he said. "I never broke any laws. But in hindsight, I made mistakes and I apologize."

Cubs chairman Tom Rick-

etts said the team is "ready to move forward together" with Sosa and plans to invite Sosa to the annual fan convention Jan. 17-19 in Chicago.

"We appreciate Sammy releasing his statement and for reaching out," Ricketts said. "No one played harder or wanted to win more. Nobody's perfect but we never doubted his passion for the game and the Cubs. It is an understatement to say that Sammy is a fan favorite."

Sosa, the franchise's record-holder with 545 home runs, was traded to Baltimore after he showed up late for the 2004 finale at Wrigley Field and left early. Sosa, Barry Bonds and Mark McGwire, all tainted by allegations of performance-

enhancing drugs use, fell well short of Hall of Fame election in 2022 on their 10th and final appearance on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot. Sosa received a high of 18.5% support in his final appearance, less than a quarter of the 75% needed. His next chance for consideration would be if he is placed on the ballot for the contemporary player committee, which meets next December.

Now 56, Sosa was a seven-time All-Star and the 1998 NL MVP for the Cubs. He hit .273 with 609 home runs currently ninth on the career list with 1,667 RBIs and 234 stolen bases in 18 major league seasons from 1989 to 2007 with Texas (1989, 2007), the Chicago White

Sox (1989-91), the Cubs (1992-04) and Baltimore (2005).

During congressional testi-

mony in 2005, Sosa denied using performance-enhancing drugs. □



**Chicago Cubs' Sammy Sosa connects for a three-run home run in the third inning against the St. Louis Cardinals Sunday, July 11, 2004 at Busch Stadium in St. Louis.**

**Associated Press**



# 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 15 - 26, 2024

Receive one (1) raffle ticket for every 50 points /\$25 theoretical win.  
Earning period starting December 1, 2024.

**OVER \$35,000 IN PRIZES!**

**\$10,000**  
IN SLOT CREDIT  
PRIZES

**\$11,150**  
IN HOLIDAY BINGO  
CASH PRIZES  
(DEC 24 & 26)

**\$15,000**  
IN CASH  
PRIZES

**DRAWINGS EVERY NIGHT STARTING AT 7:00PM**

The Casino at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba encourages Responsible Gaming.

## Jayden Daniels is maturing into a better pocket passer late in his rookie year with the Commanders

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

AP Sports Writer

**ASHBURN, Va. (AP)** — When Jayden Daniels was staring in his first few games in the NFL with the Washington Commanders, his first college coach expected the rookie quarterback to handle whatever speed bump was coming. Herm Edwards also predicted that Daniels would evolve.

"He understands that you're going to win games from the pocket," Edwards said in October. "You've got to win games from the pocket. That running is good and people get all excited, but at the end of the day you've got to play good within the framework of the pocket and he knows that and he can do that." Daniels has done that to near perfection the past two games, completing nearly 82% of his passes after converting 61% the previous five games, when he was coming off a rib injury. It's no coincidence



**Washington Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels (5) warms up before an NFL football game against the New Orleans Saints in New Orleans, Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024.**

**Associated Press**

then that the Commanders are on a two-game winning streak and at 9-5 remain on track to make the playoffs with Daniels leading the way. "I would just say it's just finding completions, getting the ball in my hands and letting the guys make plays," Daniels said Wednesday, his 24th birthday. "That's kind of where we're at now." Daniels still has the

scrambling and running element to his game and heads into a rematch with the NFC East-leading Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday coming off a 66-yard rushing performance at New Orleans. He and the team could do without the eight sacks, but perhaps more importantly he was 25 of 31 for 226 yards passing and a couple of touchdown throws

to top receiver Terry McLaurin. But fine-tuning the passing prowess has been an area of emphasis for Daniels and the coaching staff since he joined the organization as the second pick in the draft. "One of the things that we've worked really hard on is (Daniels) remaining a passer inside of the pocket," coach Dan Quinn said. "He's got legs to move, and so for him, remaining a passer longer, the guys stay in coverage longer, the receivers down the field are working. I think that part of the game, there's been improvement and I would say we're still progressing in that spot." Quinn said Daniels came out of college — first at Arizona State under Edwards, followed by two years at LSU — with a really solid background of fundamentals. An intangible he has noticed is making good decisions with the football. That also has been better lately. Daniels has five touchdowns and just one

interception in the past two games after throwing three picks during Washington's three-game losing streak in November.

Unsurprisingly, he remains a heavy favorite to win AP Offensive Rookie of the Year honors, and he's the conference's leading Pro Bowl vote-getter at quarterback. After getting serenaded and presented with a cake for his birthday by teammate Mike Sainristil, Daniels acknowledged he has not thought much about the difference the past year has made and all the accolades and attention he has received.

"I'm doing really good, can't complain," Daniels said. "It's just keeping the main thing the main thing and being where my feet are. That's what my parents always told me growing up is just be where your feet are. Don't worry about the future, what happened in the past. All that matters in the moment." □